REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and following remarks. Claim 10 is amended and supported for example in original claims 12 and 18. Claims 12 and 18 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 19-22 are added. Claim 19 is supported for example at page 6, lines 1-14. Claim 20 is supported for example in FIG. 5A-5B. Claim 21 is supported for example at page 4, lines 22-27, and claim 22 is supported for example in claims 10 and 14. No new matter has been added. Claims 10, 11, 13-17, and 19-22 are pending.

The specification is objected to because the Abstract includes reference numbers in improper form. Applicant has amended the Abstract to remove the reference numbers.

Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 10-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection to the extent it is maintained.

Claim 10 has been amended to remove the language at issue. Claim 18 has been cancelled. Claim 11 is amended to address the lack of antecedent basis. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are definite.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 10-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 2001-141686 in view of either one of Yamamoto et al. (US 4889229) and Swain (US 3139976). Applicant notes that Yamamoto et al. (US 4889229) has been incorrectly cited in PTO-892 as Sandish et al. (US 4889239), and respectfully requests that the Examiner issue a new PTO-892 correctly citing the Yamamoto et al. reference. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection to the extent it is maintained.

Claim 10 is directed to a sensor-container combination, where the container is transparent or semi-transparent only in its bottom part. As one of its advantages, the claimed invention can allow for checking the number of sensors visually from the outside without having to open or close the container, while limiting the exposure to light such as when the sensors are being checked. The claimed invention further can help prevent the sensors from deteriorating due to oxidation caused by air or humidity brought by air, since the number of opening and closing of the container may be reduced. (See for example page 2, lines 16-20 and page 3, lines 14-19.)

The cited references, however, do not disclose or suggest claim 10. For example, the cited references do not disclose or suggest a container that is transparent or semi-transparent only in its bottom part. JP 2001-141686 describes a sensor storage case 3, but does not disclose or suggest a container that is transparent or semi-transparent only in its bottom part.

Yamamoto et al. and Swain do not remedy the deficiencies of JP 2001-141686. Yamamoto et al. merely describes a case 12 that may be entirely or partially transparent, so that a plurality of electronic component chips stored in an internal space of the case 12 can be recognized from the exterior. (Column 6, lines 42-46.) However, Yamamoto et al. does not disclose or suggest a container that is transparent or semi-transparent only in its bottom part. To the contrary, Yamamoto et al. discusses that when the case 12 is at least partially transparent, graduations 15 may be provided on the side of the case, as schematically shown in Figure 1, so that the quantity of remaining electronic component chips can be recognized in relation to the graduations 15. Thus, Yamamoto et al. does not provide what is missing from JP 2001-141868 and is deficient. Moreover, Yamamoto et al. provides no reasonable motivation for setting only the bottom part of its case to be transparent or semi-transparent as in claim 10. The reference discusses nothing of the benefits that may be derived from having a container that is transparent or semi-transparent only in its bottom part, namely preventing the undesired effect of sensor deterioration. Rather, the reference provides transparent graduations on the side of the case so that electronic component chips can be recognized from the exterior. For at least the foregoing, Yamamoto et al. is further removed from claim 10 and irrelevant.

Swain describes a coin holder with a tubular portion that may be transparent or opaque. Swain, however, does not disclose or suggest a container that is transparent or semi-transparent only in its bottom part. Furthermore, Swain provides no reasonable motivation for setting only the bottom part of its case to be transparent or semi-transparent as in claim 10. The reference is merely a coin holder that may be a clear plastic material, and discusses nothing of the benefits that may be derived from having a container that is transparent or semi-transparent only in its bottom part, namely preventing the undesired effect of sensor deterioration. For at least the foregoing reasons, Swain is further removed from claim 10 and irrelevant.

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 10 is patentable for at least the foregoing reasons. Claims 11 and 13-17 depend upon claim 10 and are allowable for at least the same reasons with respect to claim 10. Applicant does not concede the correctness of the rejection as to any of these claims.

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 13-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the art as applied to claim 10, and further in view of any one of Say et al. (US 6464849), Feldman et al. (US 6461496), and Say et al. (US 6175752). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection to the extent it is maintained.

Claims 13-17 depend upon and further limit claim 10, which has been discussed above as allowable. Say et al. (US 6464849), Feldman et al. (US 6461496), and Say et al. (US 6175752) do not remedy the deficiencies of the primary references applied to claim 10 above. Thus, claims 13-17 are patentable over the references cited.

Furthermore, claims 13-17 are separately patentable for at least the following reasons. The rejection contends that Say et al., Feldman et al., and Say et al. each discloses sensors that are composed of materials resistant to ultraviolet light. Applicant respectfully disagrees, and contends that these references do not disclose or suggest the use of materials resistant to ultraviolet light as the materials for the sensors. For example, the references merely describe that a binder is cured using ultraviolet light (see for example Say et al., column 11, lines 7-9.) The references, however, do not disclose or suggest the features recited by claims 13-17. Thus, claims 13-17 are patentable over the references cited for at least these reasons.

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Regarding claims 19-21, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims depend upon and further limit claim 10, and are patentable for at least the same reasons discussed with respect to claim 10.

Added claim 22 includes the features of claims 10 and 14. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 22 is patentable because references of record do not disclose or suggest the features recited by the claim.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant believes that the claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested in the form of a Notice of Allowance. If any questions arise concerning this communication, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

HAMRE, SCHUMANN, MUELLER & LARSON, P.C.
P.O. Box 2902
Minneapolis, MN 55402-0902
(612) 455-3800

Dated: November 12, 2007

By: Curtis B. Hamre

Curtis B. Hamre
Reg. No. 29,165
CBH/baw